

Fresh From the Kitchen

Recipes excerpted from ***Kneadlessly Simple, Fabulous, Fuss-Free, No-Knead Breads*** by Nancy Baggett. Copyright 2009. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc, Hoboken, NJ. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Great Granola Breakfast Bread

Enriched with both granola and milk, this large, slightly sweet loaf is great for breakfast on the go. It's also good for toasting and makes a fine French toast or brunch bread. The loaf has a handsome, nubby-crusty top and light crumb accented with pleasing little patches and bursts of granola flavor. It always receives compliments and is a favorite with my family and friends.

Almost any purchased or homemade granola you like will do for this recipe; I'm partial to honey-oat with almonds. Whatever your choice, if it's coarse and chunky, crush it into fine (1/8-inch) bits before using. The easiest way is to put it into a sturdy plastic bag and either squeeze and press it with your hands, or, if it's hard and crunchy, go over it with a rolling pin (or a wine bottle if that's handier!).

Yield: 1 large loaf, 12 to 14 slices.

KS (Kneadlessly Simple) Quotient: Easy, Easily assembled ingredients and easy preparation. No hand-shaping.

3 cups (15 ounces) unbleached all-purpose white flour, plus more as needed
3 tablespoons granulated sugar, plus 1 tablespoon for garnish
1-1/4 teaspoons table salt
3/4 teaspoon instant, fast-rising, or bread machine yeast
1-1/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons ice water, plus more if needed
3 tablespoons corn oil, canola oil or other flavorless vegetable oil, plus more for dough top and pan
1-1/3 cups plain, raisin, honey-oat, mixed fruit and nut, or other fine-textured granola, plus 4 tablespoons for garnish
1/3 cup top-quality instant nonfat powdered milk (don't use a generic brand)

First Rise: In a large bowl, thoroughly stir together the flour, sugar, salt, and yeast. In another bowl or measuring cup, whisk together the water and oil. Vigorously stir the mixture into the bowl with the flour, scraping down the sides until the ingredients are thoroughly blended. If the mixture is too dry to incorporate all the flour, a bit at a time, stir in just enough more ice water to blend the ingredients; don't over moisten, as the dough should be stiff. Brush or spray the top with oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. If desired, for best flavor or for convenience, you can refrigerate the dough for 3 to 10 hours. Then let rise at cool room temperature for 12 to 18 hours.

Great Granola Breakfast Bread, continued

Second Rise: Vigorously stir the dough, gradually sprinkling over the 1-1/3 cups granola and the milk powder; continue stirring until evenly distributed throughout the dough. Very generously oil a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of the granola and tip the pan back and forth to distribute it over the bottom and sides. Turn out the dough into the pan. Brush or spray the loaf top with oil. Using an oiled rubber spatula or your fingertips, smooth and press the dough evenly into the pan. Sprinkle the top with the remaining 2 tablespoons granola pressing down lightly. Cover the bowl with nonstick spray-coated plastic wrap.

Let Rise Using Any of These Methods: For a 2- to 3-hour regular rise, let stand at warm room temperature; for a 1- to 2-hour accelerated rise, let stand in a turned-off microwave along with 1 cup of boiling-hot water; or for an extended rise, refrigerate, covered, for 4 to 48 hours, then set out at room temperature. Continue the rise until the dough nears the plastic. Remove it and continue until the dough extends 1/4-inch above the pan rim.

Baking Preliminaries: 15 minutes before baking time, place a rack in the lower third of the oven; preheat to 375°F. Sprinkle the loaf with the 1 tablespoon sugar.

Baking: Bake on the lower rack for 40 to 50 minutes, until the top is nicely browned. Cover with foil and continue baking for 25 to 30 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the thickest part comes out with just a few crumbs on the top (or until the center registers 205° to 208°F on an instant-read thermometer). When the loaf seems done, bake for 5 minutes longer to ensure the center is baked through. Cool in the pan or a wire rack for 10 or 15 minutes. Remove the loaf to the rack. Cool thoroughly.

Serving and Storing: The loaf slices best when cool, but tastes good warm. Cool completely before storing airtight in plastic or foil. It will keep at room temperature for 2 to 3 days, and may be frozen, airtight, for up to 2 months.